**Listening and summarising**

Procedure

* The idea-giver (IG) notes down on a card a subject on which s/he can put forward a (fairly) strong opinion.
* The IG highlights the main arguments which support the position before handing the card to a colleague / 2 colleagues.
* The recipients of the card prepare the counter arguments to the stated position.
* Taking 3 – 4 minutes, the recipients argue / present the opposite of the stated position while the original IG listens and, if necessary, checks understanding and makes notes.
* The original IG summarises what has been said without entering a discussion or putting forward his/her own views.
* Observers give feedback on:
* Were any key points omitted?
* Was the summariser’s personal opinion apparent?
* Was the statement reported accurately and fairly?



Trainer Notes

**This is a great listening and summarising activity that you can comfortably use for groups at B2 level or above. (I’ve had great results with native-speakers as it is as much a communication- as a language exercise.) All you need is half a dozen participants who are ready to share their thoughts.**

* The idea is to demonstrate how hard it is to listen and summarise when you disagree with what you are hearing. The temptation is to enter into a discussion, ignore uncomfortable arguments and/or to colour the summary with personal opinions.
* The exercise needs a set of clearly expressed, strongly held views at the beginning. If these are not forthcoming, throw out a couple of possible themes (Expelling financially-unsound countries from the EU, quotas for women in management, minimum wage, veggie day in public offices etc.).
* You are looking for a central statement with 3 or 4 supporting arguments (I think that most people will agree… This is clearly demonstrated by… Beyond this… What is more… Finally,…)
* Each idea giver (IG) notes these thoughts on an A5 card.
* When the cards are exchanged, allow a couple of minutes for the recipient to read and check their understanding of the stated position.
* The recipient of the card makes a presentation/statement (max 2 or 3 minutes) arguing the exact opposite of what they read on the card. It will probably be necessary to give them a few minutes to make notes and get their thoughts clear.

**It might be useful if the mini-presentations are done one-at-a-time in plenum. Suggest that the IG make notes on what s/he hears. Suggest the observers give feedback.** Language points which lend themselves to the exercise are

* Linking phrases to build an argument
* Blocks on listening
* Stating and refuting opinions